

Matsudaira Castle Site

On a now heavily forested hill overlooking the road into the village of Matsudaira is the site of a small medieval fortress where the Matsudaira samurai family were prepared to retreat in the event that their estate down in the village should fall into enemy hands. Though known as Matsudaira Castle, this stronghold is thought to have consisted mainly of rudimentary fortifications around the top of the hill, around 300 meters above sea level, and some 70 meters above the village. The hill is thought to have been cleared and fortified sometime in the 1400s, when sections of it near the top may have been flattened and enclosed with fences where sentries could be stationed. A watchtower overlooking the road may also have been built at that time, while the dry moat that appears to have circled the stronghold is likely to have been added later.

Though relatively simple, the fort is thought to have had potential as a refuge of last resort. It had its own well, provided defenders with an unobstructed view of the village below, and could be left relatively unmaintained in times of peace. Whether it was ever used in battle, however, is not known. The fortress site, which is part of the Matsudaira National Historic Site, has been reclaimed by nature, and it takes a trained eye to spot any remains of the fortifications.

There is an unpaved trail to the top, and the climb takes only a few minutes.